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The President's Daily Brief

March 27, 1974

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

March 27, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[redacted] Moscow may be about to begin exporting MIG-23 aircraft to the Middle East, probably to Egypt. (Page 1)

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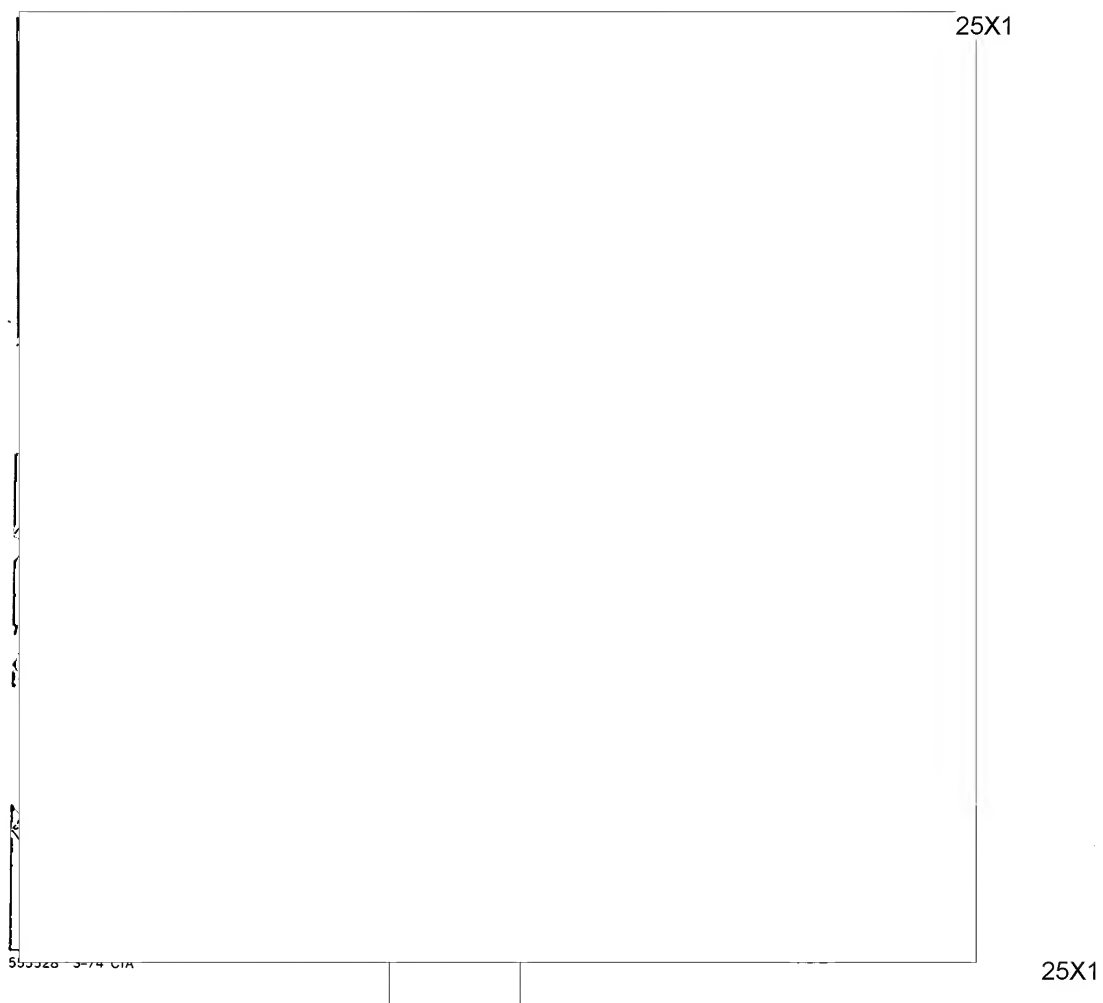
Indonesian President Suharto seems to have persuaded his military colleagues to suppress their differences in order to present a united front to civilian critics. (Page 2)

Substantial segments within the Portuguese military are still dissatisfied with the government's conduct of the African war and its treatment of military dissenters. (Page 3)

The Ethiopian military is increasingly restive over the government's failure to dismiss discredited senior officers and prosecute corrupt officials. (Page 4)

Notes on Syria-USSR, Libya-Egypt, Hungary, Romania, and the USSR appear on Pages 5 and 6.

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USSR-EGYPT

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INDONESIA

President Suharto, concerned by serious youth rioting in January and by the appearance of army factionalism, seems to have persuaded his military colleagues to suppress their differences. Top commanders, who met recently in Jakarta, apparently accepted without debate the official government position that recent student turmoil and army rivalries were primarily the work of political provocateurs and could be ended by tightening internal security. Neither did the military leaders object to Suharto's moves to take greater personal control of the military and civilian bureaucracy.

The military was deeply shaken by the January riots and probably still has doubts about Suharto's style of government, which seems to them to swing abruptly from liberal to authoritarian. His recent moves will not resolve the underlying social and economic issues that fueled the unrest. Any renewed signs of social tension will undoubtedly revive discussion within military circles about Suharto's leadership.

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PORTUGAL

Substantial segments of the Portuguese Army are still dissatisfied with the government's policy in the African territories and its treatment of military dissenters. Petitions have been circulated which call for a solution to the African problem similar to that advocated by the ousted General Spinola. Another document protests the arrest of officers involved in the short-lived revolt earlier this month.

Some members of the military are said to be drafting a petition calling for the removal of the army and defense ministers because they did not give Spinola their full support once the dispute became public.

Rumors still persist about a major shake-up in the government. There is no indication that the cabinet held its regular meeting last week.

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ETHIOPIA

The military is growing increasingly impatient over the government's failure to dismiss discredited senior officers and prosecute corrupt officials. Dissident police and army units, although still apparently loyal to the government, arrested several of their senior officers yesterday and broadcast demands for speedy judicial action against officials charged with corruption.

Such legal proceedings pose serious risks for Haile Selassie and Prime Minister Endalkatchew; the Emperor's prestige will suffer if widespread corruption is uncovered, and Endalkatchew, a minister in the former cabinet, is believed to have used his official position for personal gain. Officials in the new government may also be involved.

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NOTES

Syria-USSR: President Asad has accepted a Soviet invitation to visit Moscow during the first half of April, according to Radio Damascus. He will certainly confer with Soviet leaders about Syrian-Israeli disengagement negotiations, and he may well press Moscow for still more arms. Asad is likely to resist whatever attempts the Soviets may make to persuade him to soften Syria's terms for attending the Geneva peace talks. Asad's trip nevertheless will help satisfy Soviet demands that the Arabs consult more fully with the USSR on the Middle East situation and thereby give Moscow a more prominent role in the negotiations.

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Hungary: Soviet pressure was apparently an important element in the shake-up of the Hungarian leadership last week.

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the Hungarians, in response to Moscow's prompting, will conduct an exchange of party membership cards by this time next year rather than in 1980, when such an exchange was routinely scheduled. During the current Soviet-sponsored drive for orthodoxy in Eastern Europe, the exchange could be used by conservatives to thin out the Hungarian party's ranks, removing nationalists and economic "liberals." Both of these groups are important sources of support for party First Secretary Kadar, who has hitherto maneuvered deftly in pursuing relatively liberal policies.

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Romania: Personnel shifts announced at the Central Committee plenum yesterday are in line with Ceausescu's frequent shifting of party and state leaders to maintain a balance of loyalty and expertise. They do not indicate major changes in foreign or domestic policy. Premier Maurer has been replaced by Manea Manescu, a leading economist of proven loyalty, in a move that tightens Ceausescu's control of the bureaucracy. Others promoted were younger and better-educated than their predecessors and demonstrably loyal to Ceausescu; their past experience suggests an emphasis on increased efficiency in the domestic economy and in foreign trade.

USSR: The Soviets placed a satellite in a geostationary orbit for the first time yesterday

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Although the satellite's mission is unclear, it may be the first step in a program to develop a geostationary communications satellite; Soviet scientists have talked about such a satellite--Stationsar--on several occasions in the past five years. The orbit of the satellite launched yesterday would enable it to be used by ground stations in the Soviet Union 24 hours a day. It could also be used for gaining strategic early warning or gathering intelligence.

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